



► *i-eval* Flash news

The ILO Evaluation Office is pleased to share the forty-fifth edition of *i-eval* Flash news. Through this triannual electronic bulletin, we provide readers with updates, news and information on publications and upcoming events related to evaluation.

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Message from the director



From accountability to evidence generation: Advancing evaluation utility through artificial intelligence

by Guy Thijs

In today's demanding times—marked by rapid change and growing demands on the International Labour Organization (ILO)—the need for credible, timely, and accessible evaluative evidence has never been greater. Strengthening effectiveness depends on more than producing high-quality evaluations: it requires improving access so that decision-makers, including Governing Body members and management, can draw on evidence to support learning and shape policy and practice.

For more than a decade, EVAL has invested in innovation to meet this challenge. From the pioneering [i-eval Discovery](#) platform, which revolutionized access to evaluation reports and good practices, to the Automated Management Response System, which streamlined accountability. Our goal has always been to make evidence a practical, actionable resource for the ILO.

Since March 2025, in partnership with INFOTEC and as part of Director General's-led pilots on artificial intelligence (AI) across the Organization, we launched the very first pilot with a workable and impressive product called [i-eval AI Assistant](#). Colleagues can pose complex questions in natural language and receive source-cited, hyperlinked answers in under 20 seconds. Drawing on nearly 2,000 evaluation reports and thousands of lessons learned and good practices, the assistant significantly reduces the time and effort needed to integrate evidence into project design, policy shaping, and implementation.

What once required combing through hundreds of pages can now be condensed into coherent, well-sourced answers in seconds. Evaluation evidence can move from a background reference to a real-time input shaping tasks and decisions—whether drafting policy briefs, designing projects, improving project performance, or adjusting course. By facilitating access, the AI Assistant supports stronger programming, enhances accountability, and contributes to more resilient responses in a fast-changing world of work.

Even in one of our busiest periods—finalizing the Annual Evaluation Report and preparing the three corporate high-level evaluations for the upcoming Governing Body—we wanted to highlight something forward-looking. While accountability is key, every evaluation report also contains examples of strong achievements and valuable insights on how they were reached. Innovation and creativity are helping us build better systems, tools, and learning cultures across the Organization. The *i-eval* AI Assistant is not just a technical solution; it is a reminder that evaluation can be a source of confidence in evidence-based decision-making—helping the ILO adapt, innovate, and continue delivering on its mandate of social justice and decent work.

We invite ILO colleagues to join the expanded pilot phase, test the tool ([click here](#)), and help shape its finetuning so we can roll it out to all staff before the end of this year, with a full public launch planned for early next year. Together, we can make evaluative evidence more accessible, actionable, and directly useful for informed decision-making and strengthening the ILO's work.

 [i-eval Discovery](#)

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Innovation & research



Completed studies

Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: A meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations completed in 2024

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is pleased to present the results from the recent annual assessments of independent evaluation reports of development cooperation projects, used as proxies to gauge the ILO's overall performance. The latest meta-analysis focuses on the delivery of decent work outcomes in 2024, evaluating four key performance categories—strategic relevance and coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, and efficiency—alongside the ILO's cross-cutting policy issues.

This analysis is part of a broader series of decent work results assessments conducted over the past ten years, enabling trend identification and comparative analysis across topics and regions over time. These insights help guide strategic adjustments, enhance programmatic value, and identify effective practices. The meta-analysis also includes performance trends at the policy outcome level and across regional programmatic clusters for the period 2022–24. A key feature this year is the introduction of a thematic chapter on the impact and sustainability of ILO's work, responding to growing stakeholder demand for clearer value for investment. *The meta-study will be published in October, and its findings will be presented to the ILO Governing Body during its 355th Session in October/November 2025, as part of the Annual Evaluation Report.*

Synthesis review of evaluations conducted in the Arab States region

In May 2024, the ILO's Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) set out to take stock of its recent work by commissioning a synthesis review of evaluations carried out between 2018 and 2023. These evaluations, which are central to the ILO's culture of accountability and learning, shed light on how well projects in the region were delivered in terms of their relevance, impact, and sustainability. The review consolidated findings, recommendations, and good practices to identify recurring themes and lessons that can strengthen future initiatives. Covering 12 Arab States where the ILO has been active since 1976, the report is designed to provide specialists and country teams with sharper insights for planning and designing projects that better respond to local needs. Read the [report here](#) and the [next steps](#).

New i-eval Insights publications

EVAL is pleased to announce two new editions of its flagship report series, i-eval Insights, which highlights key performance trends in the ILO's work and achievements on selected topics. Drawing from nearly 200 evaluations, the two new papers showcase [how the ILO is strengthening tripartism and social dialogue](#), and [how it is promoting equal opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities](#) through development cooperation projects. *Stay tuned for the upcoming Insight Series No° 4.*

Key takeaways include:

Driving change through social dialogue

- Structured social dialogue mechanisms ensure sustainability and impact.
- Capacity building is a critical pillar for effective social dialogue.
- Trust and relationship-building are essential for effective social dialogue.
- Embedding tripartite dialogue in national policy frameworks strengthens labour governance.
- Constituent engagement is the cornerstone of effective tripartism.

Advancing disability inclusion

- Inclusive design from the outset can strengthen outcomes and enables policy-level impact.
- Strategic partnerships across government, social partners and organizations of persons with disabilities to amplify reach and effectiveness.
- Adaptive, flexible implementation ensures accessibility and participation, even amid shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Challenging stigma and shifting attitudes are critical to unlocking opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Embedding disability inclusion in laws, systems and institutions is key to long-term sustainability.
- Empowering persons with disabilities as leaders and decision-makers drives lasting change.



i-eval Insights, No. 2
[Driving change through social dialogue: How the ILO is strengthening tripartism and social dialogue through development cooperation projects](#)



i-eval Insights, No. 3
[Driving change through social dialogue: How the ILO is strengthening tripartism and social dialogue through development cooperation projects](#)

Planned and ongoing studies

***i-eval* Insights, No.4 – Impact in action: How the ILO shaped policies, delivered strategic results and ensured sustainability through development cooperation in 2024**

EVAL will soon launch the fourth edition of the *i-eval* Insights series, providing a thematic analysis of impact and sustainability from the ILO Development Cooperation portfolio in 2024, by examining trends across three core areas: policy influence, strategic delivery, and sustainability enhancement. *Stay tuned for more information!*

Synthesis review on social dialogue

EVAL is finalizing a synthesis review of social dialogue interventions from 2019-25, in preparation for the next International Labour Conference's (ILC) recurrent discussion on the topic in June 2026. Drawing on 52 evaluation reports and other ILO publications, the review analyses how social dialogue, defined as negotiation, consultation and the exchange of information between governments, employers and workers, has responded to global challenges such as COVID-19, climate change and digital transformation.

The review finds that ILO interventions have frequently contributed to strengthening tripartism and labour market governance through the institutionalization of tripartite bodies, capacity development of constituents, and efforts to promote the inclusion of women, youth, informal workers and migrants. Social dialogue has also supported policy coherence, just transitions and resilience in times of crisis.

Challenges remain, including variable political commitment, capacity constraints among social partners and the underrepresentation of vulnerable groups. Promising approaches identified include legal reforms, targeted capacity building, innovative participation models and strengthened monitoring and evaluation.

These findings will inform evidence-based recommendations aimed at further supporting the role of social dialogue in advancing decent work in a rapidly changing world.

Synthesis review of Country Programme Reviews and evaluation reports 2020-24: What works, what does not work and why?

EVAL is conducting the first synthesis of Country Programme Reviews (CPRs) and five high-level evaluations of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) that were conducted between 2020-24. The report will contribute to organizational learning, with the aim of improving the formulation of DWCPs, monitoring and evaluation systems, their implementation, and facilitate cross-fertilization of learning opportunities and good practices among all five ILO regions. The report will be launched by the end of the year and a webinar will be organized to disseminate the findings. Stay tuned for more information!

New publications on evaluation

Process-tracing methods in program evaluation

By Derek Beach and Estelle Raimondo

From the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group, “*Process tracing (PT) involves a detailed analysis of the processes that link interventions to outcomes. PT is particularly useful for evaluating interventions that are difficult to quantify, such as knowledge work or institution building. It involves creating a detailed causal theory, tracking the process theory of change (pToC) by examining the observable evidence, and learning general lessons from the cases studied.*”



Process-tracing methods in program evaluation

By Derek Beach and Estelle Raimondo

News from the regions



Africa

Strengthening evaluation capacity in Africa: A year of progress and promise



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In Africa, evaluation is far more than a technical requirement—it is a strategic lever for transformative change, helping to shape inclusive development across a continent rich in diversity, complexity, and potential. At the core of the process, the ILO's Regional Programming Unit (RPU) remains firmly committed to strengthening evaluation. This can be seen in the work of the Regional Evaluation Specialist, who plays a central role in driving innovation, ensuring quality, and fostering a culture of learning and accountability, despite the challenges.

One of the most pressing challenges is the sheer volume of evaluations to manage: between July 2024 and August 2025, **28 evaluations** (internal and independent) were completed, covering 31 projects across 18 countries. Currently, **25 evaluations** are underway (71% of which are independent), and nearly 30 more are planned for 2026.

Ensuring that these evaluations meet ILO's quality standards requires significant effort, especially with limited human resources. That is why the 2025 **Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP)** has been such a game-changer. A strong emphasis on Africa was placed in this year's bilingual edition, with eight of the eleven selected ILO participants coming from the region. After undergoing an intensive theoretical training, these colleagues are now managing independent evaluations under the overall guidance of EVAL experts and the supervision of the REO. By the end of 2025, they will join the cohort of certified evaluation managers, including four colleagues from Africa currently enrolled in the advanced EMCP+ programme. Thanks to EVAL's capacity-building efforts, Africa is poised to significantly strengthen its evaluation capabilities.

Beyond accountability and transparency, ILO evaluations aim to add real value to programming—by demonstrating impact, extracting lessons learned, and informing future design. A prime example is the [final evaluation of the WAFIRA I project in Morocco](#), finalized in March 2025, which recommended improving access to finance for seasonal migrant workers. This insight directly shaped the second phase of the project, which now includes “Increased access to financial and technical support” as a core outcome, with partnerships to be built around local financial institutions.

Another success story is the [midterm evaluation of the Opportunity Salone Programme in Sierra Leone](#) completed in late 2024, which led to a 15-month extension and a 50% budget increase to better support SMEs' market access—a recommendation of the evaluation and an investment expected to yield tangible benefits for entrepreneurs and trainees alike.

Looking ahead, RPU through its Regional Evaluation Specialist will invest in disseminating, tracking, and using evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned. While EVAL's recommendation tracking system is robust, country offices and thematic specialists sometimes need synthesized insights by thematic area or strategic priority/outcome. The new [i-eval AI Assistant](#), developed and piloted by EVAL, offers a promising solution for conducting such synthesis reviews quickly and efficiently. In the upcoming biennium, the Regional Office for Africa will prioritize thematic synthesis reviews. This includes one covering evaluations conducted between 2024 and 2025 to derive lessons learned and good practices by themes or implementation areas, and others focused on formalization, child labour, and domestic work to inform programmatic efforts in these themes.

Africa's evaluation journey is gaining momentum—and with the right tools, talent, and commitment, we're ready to turn insights into impact.



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News from the departments

Universal Social Protection Department

ILO's Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All (Phase II: 2021–25) – Learning opportunities from a recent evaluation

Since 2020, [39 independent evaluations of development cooperation projects in the field of social protection](#) have been conducted. Among the most recent, an [independent midterm evaluation of the ILO's Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All \(Phase II\)](#), was completed in October 2024 and assessed its performance to guide the Flagship Programme moving forward. The [Flagship Programme](#) supports ILO constituents in promoting, designing and implementing universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable national social protection systems including floors anchored in international social security standards, in order to make the universal right to social security a reality in a selected number of priority countries.

Evaluation scope and dimensions

The evaluation reviewed implementation progress, achievements, and lessons learned. It offers recommendations to enhance effectiveness and to inform both the final evaluation and planning for Phase III. It assessed performance across six dimensions—relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability—while considering cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change, and informality.

The evaluation provided an integrated assessment of the different components of the Flagship Programme: (a) individual projects and their potential for shared learning across country, regional and global levels; (b) a programmatic framework providing a common theory of change to promote coherence across all Flagship initiatives; and (c) country case studies allowing a deep-dive into the Flagship Programme's support in ten countries and across three thematic areas.

The evaluation built on the programmatic scope of the Flagship Programme to leverage the strategic value of clustered evaluations by moving beyond assessing individual projects in isolation and generated system-level insights. The clustering included the mid-term evaluation of the multi-donor programme in support of Phase II of the Flagship Programme (GLO/21/34/MUL) funded by Belgium, Luxembourg, and the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) as well as the IrishAid Partnership Programme “Accelerating the Achievement of Universal Social Protection to Leave No One Behind” (GLO/22/31/IRL).

Key findings and recommendations

Relevance and coherence

The Flagship Programme is well-aligned with the ILO's social protection mandate, the Decent Work Agenda, and SDG targets 1.3 and 3.8. To maximize its impact, stronger coordination with UN-wide initiatives such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions (Global Accelerator) is needed to ensure complementarity, minimize duplication and enhance synergies. Sustained progress is constrained by funding gaps limiting visibility, communication and human resource support.

Effectiveness

From 2021 to 2023, the programme contributed to 105 institutional changes across 40 countries, extending social protection to 31.3 million people—exceeding targets and demonstrating strong delivery capacity. Social protection floors advanced in 50 countries, and seven ratified Convention No. 102, signalling increased commitment to international labour standards. Further expertise is needed in gender-responsive protection and climate adaptation. Expanding coverage for informal workers remains critical to closing protection gaps. Strengthening reporting systems—with clearer methodologies and more disaggregated data—will be essential for fully leveraging the Programme's results for evidence-based policymaking, global advocacy, and peer learning.



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Efficiency

The programme has optimized resources through strategic partnerships, achieving a 70% financial execution rate and 61% expenditure rate by 2023. Coordinated field missions generated cost efficiencies, and extra-budgetary allocations strengthened overall financing capacity. To sustain and accelerate impact, addressing operational bottlenecks and staffing shortages at the country level will be critical.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

The programme benefits from strong constituent and donor support. The technical support facility bringing together social security expertise is a strategic asset but requires additional resourcing. Multi-donor financing supports resource efficiency, but shifting funds to the Global Accelerator could risk financial stability post-2025. Proactively expanding partnerships with private entities, development banks, as well as traditional and emerging donors, is essential for sustainability.

Sustainability and impact

Embedding social protection in national legal frameworks ensures long-term government commitment. Strategic partnerships, such as with the International Monetary Fund, support sustainable financing. Strengthening funding strategies, exit plans for time-limited projects, and public engagement are vital for sustained impact. Tripartite involvement has driven policy outcomes, but earlier engagement is needed for stronger results.

The evaluation report provided a number of **recommendations**:

- Strengthen coordination with the Global Accelerator through joint planning, definition of roles and optimization of resources.
- Expand engagement with social partners by enhancing capacity-building for workers' and employers' organizations and promoting inclusive consultations.
- Expand the Programme while streamlining thematic areas and identifying priority countries.
- Boost technical capacities through South-South collaboration, including specialized working groups and knowledge-sharing initiatives.
- Enhance strategic partnerships with governments, social partners, NGOs, and private sector actors to foster advocacy and knowledge-sharing.
- Improve communication and coordination through the existing digital platforms, such as social-protection.org, newsletters, and thematic webinars.
- Secure financial and administrative sustainability through a long-term fundraising strategy and optimized resource allocation.

Contribution to shape strategic orientations

The Flagship Programme's management acknowledged the evaluation's recommendations and outlined key actions, including:

- **Increased coordination with the Global Accelerator**, including at the governance level, which will be reflected in the Flagship Programme's strategy for Phase III.
- **Systematic engagement with social partners** throughout the project cycle, and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Review of programme expansion** through the assessment of priority countries and thematic areas for Phase III.
- **Policy influence and capacity-building** by engaging in political-level reforms, and developing tools and knowledge products on best practices.
- **Strengthened South-South and triangular cooperation** through existing partnerships and explore new collaborations.
- **Strengthened communication and knowledge-sharing** through the development of a dedicated communication and visibility strategy to enhance outreach and stakeholder engagement.
- **Enhanced financial and administrative sustainability and resource mobilization** by developing a resource mobilization strategy that considers donor priorities, different financing streams, and exploring new partnerships and opportunities.
- **Enhanced sustainability of programme results** by including sustainability assessment in project design, focusing on institutional changes and the development of sustainable financing mechanisms.

While the evaluation will guide the Flagship Programme's implementation through the remainder of its second phase, its greater value lies in shaping the strategic direction for Phase III (2026–2030). By aligning future priorities with lessons learned and emerging trends, the Programme will be better positioned to drive progress toward the 2030 Agenda and strengthen its leadership in promoting universal social protection.



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EVAL highlights



ILO launches i-eval AI Assistant to deliver faster, smarter access to evaluation insights for evidence-based decision-making

As explained in the introduction by the Director of EVAL, the *i-eval* AI Assistant gives ILO staff rapid access to source-cited insights from over 1,700 evaluation reports, plus lessons and good practices - making it easier to apply evaluation evidence into project design, policy development, strategic communication, and decision-making. This innovation builds on EVAL's broader agenda, outlined in its [2023-25 evaluation strategy](#), to continually invest in AI-driven digital solutions that transform how evaluative knowledge supports programming, accountability, and learning across the ILO.

[Register here](#) to gain access to the *i-eval* AI Assistant (ILO staff only). A full organization-wide roll-out is expected by October and the expectation is to provide public access in 2026.

- [Watch the video](#)
- [Read the infographic](#)

Event on impact evaluation: Learning about the intricacies of randomized control trials

This past May, EVAL's Impact Evaluation Community of Practice (CoP) hosted an online event to demystify randomized control trials (RCTs). The CoP welcomed J-PAL to engage with ILO staff on the purpose of RCTs, why they're useful for impact evaluations, how to implement them, what they can do and cannot, as well as other insights and reflections.

- [Watch the recording](#)
- [View the PowerPoint presentation](#)

The next CoP takes place at the end of September 2025 to explore insights from an impact evaluation on how an ILO project enhanced youth employability in Tunisia – [learn more here](#).

Learning activities & events



Evaluation Manager Certification Programme

EVAL, in cooperation with its partner, the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), completed the theoretical phase of the 16th edition of the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP), in collaboration with the Regional Programming Unit in Africa. This bilingual edition (English and French), held from June-July 2025, benefited from the automated interpretation engine recently implemented by the ITCILO. A total of 11 ILO staff members participated in the EMCP from Africa and the Arab States regions, and Headquarters.

The training was organised into three phases: 1) pre-workshop learning activities, 2) an online learning phase of six-week duration followed by, 3) a practicum administered by EVAL. Throughout the training programme, EVAL and the Regional Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Officer from the Regional Office for Africa provided coaching. Trainees who successfully complete the practicum phase (expected by December 2025) will receive certification signed by the ILO Director-General.

Additionally, EVAL, in collaboration with its partner, the ITCILO, and with funding from HRD-Talent, launched the first edition of the Advanced Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP+), which ran from November 2024 to February 2025. The EMCP+ aims to enhance the expertise and knowledge of seasoned, certified ILO Evaluation Managers while fostering a stronger in-house community of evaluation practitioners capable of leading complex evaluations. The programme required participants to commit 30-40 hours over the training period to complete the full curriculum. Additionally, participants are expected to manage an evaluation within 12 months following the training phase and to undertake at least one more evaluation in the subsequent year.



EVAL is pleased to share a testimonial from the EMCP+'s very first graduate, as described below.

From complexity to simplicity - My journey to becoming an ILO Advanced Evaluation Manager (EMCP+)

I have been an ILO-certified evaluation manager for several years, mainly handling less complex evaluations. Seeking new challenges, I joined the 1st edition of the Advanced Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP+), which enhanced my skills and gave me hands-on experience managing a complex independent evaluations.

The programme helped me move from complexity to simplicity—learning to assess interconnected systems, diverse stakeholders, and dynamic contexts. Over four months of blended training, complex ideas were broken down into practical tools I could immediately apply.

With strong support from my peers a community of practice and EVAL, I completed my practicum: the final evaluation of a four-year global project across five continents, 18 countries, and four languages. Guided by my EVAL coach and encouraged by peers, I successfully navigated the process and am proud to be among the first certified graduates of the first edition of the the EMCP+ in 2025.

*Inviolata Chinyangarara
Specialist in Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)
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Conferences, evaluation events

- [6th Biannual Conference of the Western Balkans Evaluation Network](#): Taking place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 16-18 October 2025, the conference will focus on themes, such as evaluation methodology and building national evaluation capacities.
- [American Evaluation Association](#): This year's conference, themed "Engaging community, sharing leadership", takes place from 10-15 November 2025 in Kansas City.
- [5th Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association](#): This year's conference takes place in Tokyo from 11-14 November 2025 and will focus on the forces that globally shape evaluation institutionalization.